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General Assembly
Security Council

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A/48/351
S/26359
26 August 1993

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Forty-eighth session
Item 115 (c) of the provisional agenda*
HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATIONS AND REPORTS OF SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS AND REPRESENTATIVES

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-eighth year

Letter dated 26 August 1993 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter addressed to you by Mrs. Margit Savovic, Federal Minister for Human and Minority Rights of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 115 (c) of the provisional agenda, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dragomir DJOKIC
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* A/48/150 and Corr.1.

ANNEX

Letter from the Federal Minister for Human and Minority Rights of Yugoslavia to the Secretary-General

The Federal Ministry for Human and Minority Rights of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia considers that the allegations contained in the letter of the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Croatia to the United Nations addressed to you on 5 August 1993 (A/48/295-S/26249), are ill-intentioned as they project a distorted picture of the situation in the town of Hrtkovci and in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina as a whole.

Even though it is true that a number of Croats moved out from Hrtkovci (around 45 families), in most cases it was not due to "a policy of verbal and physical harassment, as well as other forms of intimidation, by Serbian paramilitary groups". Instead, those persons have legally exchanged their immovable property with persons of Serb nationality from different places in Croatia. It should be noted that they have been enabled to take all their movable property and possessions from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which was not the case with the Serbs leaving Croatia.

Although the majority of Croats have left of their own free will, there were some cases of forced displacement. Namely, from May to September 1992, in the town of Hrtkovci and other places in Vojvodina, some persons of Croatian origin were under pressure to leave and subjected to harassment, threatening phone calls, forceful entry into their apartments and other forms of intimidation and violation of their property rights.

The cause and scope of those events, in addition to the polarization of the population on the basis of nationality brought about by the war conflicts and the ensuing divisions, have additionally been accentuated by a substantial number of Serbian refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, whose homes have been destroyed or who have been expelled by the Croatian and Muslim authorities.

By energetic joint action of the competent federal and republic authorities, such developments have been averted and as early as September 1992 not one case of forcible entry into the homes of the Croats in Vojvodina has been registered. Likewise, according to the information of the Ministry of the Interior, there was not a single instance of forcible expulsion from the territory of Vojvodina.

The perpetrators of the murder of Milan Stefanac have been identified, detained and convicted in criminal proceedings. Criminal charges and proceedings have been instituted against persons charged with the criminal act of violating freedoms and rights of citizens belonging to other nations, nationalities or ethnic groups, threatening their safety, etc.

Margit SAVOVIC
Federal Minister for Human and
Minority Rights

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General Assembly
Security Council

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S/26370
27 August 1993

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Forty-eighth session
Item 32 of the provisional agenda*
COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN MILITARY FORCES FROM THE TERRITORIES OF THE BALTIC STATES

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-eighth year

Letter dated 26 August 1993 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Latvia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to bring to your attention the text of a statement of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Latvia (see annex) concerning the decision of the Government of the Russian Federation to suspend its troop withdrawal from Lithuania. I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 32 of the provisional agenda, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ivars SLOKENBERGS
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* A/48/150 and Corr.1.

ANNEX

Statement issued on 25 August 1993 by the
Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Latvia

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs expresses regret concerning the decision of the Government of the Russian Federation to suspend its troop withdrawal from Lithuania, thus disregarding international obligations and the troop withdrawal timetable signed by Lithuania and the Russian Federation on 8 September 1992. Such actions can cause tension in the whole Baltic region and in the long term negatively influence relations between the Russian Federation and the Baltic States.

From an international rights point of view, the fact that the agreement on troop withdrawal not signed owing to differences of opinion is irrelevant, since the presence of foreign troops on the territory of another country against its will is illegal. Therefore troop withdrawal should be concluded quickly, completely and in an orderly manner, as is demanded by the resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly and the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, even if the above-mentioned agreement is not signed.

Attempts to increase pressure on Lithuania and other Baltic States and to influence their position with the help of threats will not change the existing situation and can be regarded as a violation of the sovereignty of those States and complicate negotiations in the future.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs hopes that the Russian Federation will revise this decision and withdraw its troops, finding a solution acceptable to both sides in this controversial issue. This would be in Russia's own interests and would only strengthen its international prestige.